

Notes of Sermon preached by Mr Stanley Delves at Scaynes Hill
on Monday evening June 3, 1968

“For the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men. Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world: looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.” Titus 2:11-13.

It cannot be too firmly clearly and deeply impressed upon our hearts that nothing can bring salvation unto us but the grace of God. That is a simple statement to make, but it goes right to the foundation, it is a fundamental principle. It is a principle that lives in our personal religion, our hope, our experience. Much rests upon it. It must be all of grace, from first to last, and the grace of God will never admit of any mixture. We cannot add anything to the grace of God, because if we do it is not grace. Neither can we take from the grace of God as a divine principle. But people try to take away from the grace in their view. For example how many people take sovereignty from the grace of God? But if you take that away what is left? It is too weak to help, too dependent on man to be grace. And if you take the freeness of the grace of grace away it makes it there is something in us to merit salvation. And if you take away the power of grace, and look upon it as a proposition to men, something that does not act sufficiently and divinely upon the heart what is left? It is not grace. We can add nothing to grace, we can take nothing from it. This is a fundamental principle of doctrine and it must be insisted on else the essential principles of truth go by the board; they are thought to be so well known and understood that there is no need for their clarification. Every principle of truth needs to be set forth with clarity, and with a gracious application. For instance the law can never bring salvation unto man; it is not by the works of the law. The grace of God comes to us from the Lord Himself. The law was never meant to bring salvation: it was introduced after man fell.

Where then is the use of the law? Why was it established? It is the divine standard by which all our ways are measured and found to be crooked and wrong. It is a law of purity by which, as it shines in our hearts we see our iniquities. The law was never meant to bring salvation to men and that is nothing against good works any more than anything against God's law. God's law is perfect, good, and just. And with regard to good works, how often are they set before us in the Scriptures. And where there are no good works it is open to question whether there is any grace in the heart at all. The grace of God bringeth salvation to men. Good works are then fruit and effects of it in the life and practice of men, but good works alone will leave us ruined and lost. Then gospel ordinances can never bring salvation unto men. That again is nothing against gospel ordinances which the Lord Jesus has appointed. At least this should be a matter of very solemn exercise to our hearts and minds. No one who has any reason for a good hope in them, who has felt any workings of repentance in their heart toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ should be careless with regard to the ordinances, they have their place. The Lord is honoured in obedience to them, but they never bring salvation. What then does bring salvation? Purely and simply the grace of God.

Now this afternoon I spoke a little of the pre-eminence in the apostle's ministry of the grace of God. We considered the grace of God under the similitude in Ezekiel's vision of the living waters issuing from the sanctuary and the altar and flowing down to the Dead Sea and bringing life everywhere

that they went. So the grace of God issues forth from the eternal fountain of Deity and comes to us through the person of Jesus Christ and His atonement for sin. So the grace of God which bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men. There is no grace apart from the gospel; the very gospel is of the grace of God. Grace flows in every truth, every doctrine, every promise of the gospel. That is one reason why those who know spiritually their need, their case and poverty find the gospel meets it, and the Lord enriches their heart with his blessings, and the grace of God in the freeness so that they prize the gospel. And that is why it is such a gospel to them; it is the ring of free and sovereign grace that makes it a joyful sound to those who are in a case to hear it; the gospel in the grace of it, and the preaching of it. In a word, it is the gospel, the river of divine grace flowing in, which makes it a rich, full, sweet gospel to those who feel sin to be so bitter to their taste and their heart, such a load upon their conscience, and feel so helpless with regard to it. The ministry comes into this; only the Lord knows how many have heard the preached word so as to bring salvation into their hearts. The Holy Spirit having prepared their heart for the Word, they come under the sound of it, and as the path is set forth the Holy Spirit attends the word with that unction and power that gives it application and effect. How many have felt the grace of God has brought salvation to them through the preached word. The Lord is not dependent on any means but still it is His way to use the means He has appointed. He has said and it is an encouraging word to those, who are called to labour in the gospel "My word shall not return unto Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and shall prosper in the thing where to I sent it." A gospel ministry in which the grace of God flows to man's heart and flowing into their hearts, it brings salvation unto them is a real blessing. And I do not say that because I stand in that position that I do. I speak in an entirely detached way; the ministry is a divine appointment and as the Lord is pleased to use it, it is a great blessing, a real experience and it rests in the issue of the grace of God through the channel of gospel truth, and the gospel ministry so it must be made effectual in us by the Holy Spirit. Everything in personal, religion and experience is dependent on the Holy Spirit. If ever the gospel comes to us in power it will come from the Holy Spirit. It in the Holy Spirit exercising the power that makes the gospel effectual in our hearts, then it comes to us in much assurance and there is no question about it. So that we can say 'Well, I believe this is the gospel of the grace of God and I feel thankful for it, and feel I can safely die on it.'

Thus the grace of God bring salvation to men. Now there are two ways in which the grace of God brings salvation. It brings salvation in the outward proclamation of it, and it is with regard to that the Scripture speaks. Now do we receive the grace of God in vain? Now no-one can receive the grace of God in vain if it is made effectual by the Holy Spirit. But they can receive the grace of God in vain as they hear the proclamation of it and do not value it. Every time one hears the gospel preached they are receiving the grace of God in vain in the proclamation of it. And there is a responsibility attached to that which cannot be avoided. But on the positive side the grace of God bringeth salvation definitely. But to whom does it bring salvation? It certainly does not bring salvation effectually to all men; otherwise all men would be saved.

Brethren the grace of God will bring salvation to every chosen vessel of mercy, everyone upon whom the eye and the hand and the heart and the purposes of God were fixed from eternity, to all the election of grace; all whom God has appointed to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. The grace of God will not fail to bring salvation unto them. They must all be born into this life in order to be born again; in order that the grace of God can bring salvation unto them. To me there is nothing harsh or hard about this, and I hope I do not present it to my hearers in a hard or forbidding

way. To me it is so Scriptural and so solid and certain; there is nothing left to uncertainty where the purposes of God are concerned. It is so plain that if God had not chosen a people He would not have people at all. If it were not His purpose to save it would not be man's purpose to be saved. If it was not God's purpose in His holy mind to send the only begotten Son of God to save sinners, no soul would be saved. There is no doubt but that the grace of God will bring salvation to every elect soul and when salvation is brought to a soul it is a clear and certain proof of that soul having been elected unto salvation. The Apostle says very clearly that he looked upon it as something to bless God for that He had chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world being predestinated to this holy and blessed end. And further the grace of God will be sure to bring salvation to everyone that Jesus Christ died to redeem. The blood of Christ is far too precious to have flowed in vain in any extent whatever from His dear wounds and bleeding side. There is no question but the people of God are a special, particular, personally redeemed people. He died for them, for their sins their personal sins. He bore in his own body on the tree - it was not in an indubitable kind of way I believe He bore death for every person he died to redeem. It was a personal redemption.

Did He die in vain in any instance of one that He died to redeem? Be sure it was not so for the grace of God will bring salvation to everyone Jesus Christ died for. All these sacred and blessed things of God will fit and agree together and the grace of God will bring salvation to every penitent soul. Where there is one who is brought to repent of sins feelingly and whose spirit is turned to God to seek His mercy. "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness, according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions." Wherever there is a spirit of repentance like that, confession, contrition and a turning to God the grace of God will bring salvation to that soul, there is no question about it. In some the grace of God brings salvation quickly in the sense of experiencing it, and some for reasons we cannot understand, seem to wait long upon God, and wonder if ever salvation will come into their heart. My friends, it will; It will. The grace of God will bring salvation into every broken and contrite heart. The very state of mind to part of the preparation. The Holy Spirit prepares for salvation. It is God's way to wound before He heals to shew us our condition before He saves us from it, to make sin a burden before He relieves our conscience and speaks to our hearts. That is God's way. If there is repentance in the heart, salvation will come sooner or later, the grace of God will deliver that soul. Equally it is true that the grace of God will bring salvation to everyone that believes in Jesus, if there is a real heart turning unto Him; if they can truly say, and that God who searches the heart knows they feel it,

*Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling,
Naked, come to Thee for dress,
Helpless look to Thee for grace,
Black, I to the fountain fly,
Wash me Saviour or I die. (Gadsby's 143)*

For you know that in believing in Jesus, and the grace of God will bring salvation to everyone that believes in, Him. It must do, because the Scripture says, "He that believeth in Him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

Now let us look of the salvation it brings – every aspect of salvation is blessed. For instance if we regard it as salvation from the guilt of sin which gives us such distress of mind, it delivers us from the awful load that would sink us into hell if we are not delivered from it. The salvation which says in substance ‘Son, thy sins are forgiven thee,’ and brings pardon into the conscience eases the pain purifies and heals the wounds – O this is grace that brings salvation into the soul for then there is a rejoicing in the Lord. "I will be glad in the Lord, and rejoice in the God of my salvation." Nothing can bring pardon into our heart but the grace of God which flows from Jesus. If you look at salvation as salvation from the filth of sin that living water brings purity as well as pardon. I know not which of these two features of the case are more to be desired; one feels they are equally desirable. If one feels the filth of sin it is purity that is wanted; If one feels the guilt of sin it is pardon that is wanted.

*Let the water and the blood
From Thy riven side which flowed
Be of sin the double cure
Cleanse me from its guilt and power. (Gadsby's 143)*

Even if sin is forgiven and the grace of God brings pardon still there is a longing for cleansing. If you carefully read Psalm 51 there is that deep expression of David's repentance the expression of what real repentance is in the experience, the nature and the character of it. You will find there is scarcely one expression in the Psalmist's prayer for forgiveness, it is all for cleansing. "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." Why is this? Because that Psalm was written after Nathan the prophet had come to David and brought him to repentance and confession. David said, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said, and he had divine and commission and authority to say it, 'The Lord hath put away thy sin.' That was no empty word to David "The Lord hath put away thy sin." It brought forgiveness into his conscience. What then? Psalm 51 - "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean, wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." What! a pardoned man pray like that? Yes indeed! and if a pardoned man did not pray like that I should question if he was a pardoned man at all. So there it that aspect of salvation, not only bringing pardon for sin, but cleansing from filth. That makes us clean and pure in the sight of God. O blessed salvation! The grace of God brings salvation from the consequences of sin and its guilt and its filth. It is salvation that takes a man to heaven.

We might look at it another way - the grace of God which brings salvation; that salvation it brings in is so full. It is full of grace, full of love, full of mercy, it is full of Jesus Christ, and that sums up everything. 'The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared unto all men.' It appears to all men in the gospel, and in the proclamation of it. It is not supposed that when the apostle wrote this epistle to Titus it had literally and actually appeared unto all men, for the gospel at that time had not gone beyond that part of the earth where the apostles ministered, but it was the command of Christ, in the commission to His servants, and they were to go and preach the gospel to every creature. It is in the preaching of the gospel to every creature that the grace of God appears unto all men. We might pause and ask ourselves where we stand in the matter and whether the grace of God has not only brought salvation outwardly but has it brought it inwardly and effectually into our souls? If it has, you know how you feel and how the grace of God affects you, and what feeling of praise and thanksgiving to God that His grace came to you. And the effects on your heart and what a longing it gives you for His grace. It is well sometimes to stop and check ourselves as to just where we stand

personally on these matters. Then it will confirm you and me as to what really has been His own work and teaching in these things. The Lord confirm His grace in our hearts.

Now I must come to the other part of the text, in which I must be brief. First the grace of God brings salvation, and then it teaches those to whom it brings salvation how they should live. 'Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.' Now how does the grace of God teach us these things? Well, there are two ways of teaching. One way is to impart knowledge; another way of teaching is to develop the mind and understanding, and it is more particularly in that way the grace of God teaches. There are in the gospel plain, clear, precepts and admonitions and the grace of God will teach us that they need to be regarded and fulfilled and the grace of God will help us in that. Not like the man of this world teaches - a self-imposed exercise and discipline upon ourselves. The grace of God will exercise a discipline, a gracious discipline. For instance if a man goes away from this way of living soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world the grace of God will be sure to inwardly reprove him; it will make the spirit uncomfortable, unhappy, bring a secret conviction on his spirit in that matter that he has not acted rightly in the sight of God. The grace of God exercises and influences as well as it disciplines, it disposes the heart and mind to this way of life; to live soberly, righteously, and godly. The very influence of the grace of God upon the heart and mind is to dispose it to these ways and to exercise a gracious discipline in the conscience. If a man can live in an unsoberly way, in an unrighteous way, and in an ungodly way, let not that man think he knows anything about the grace of God, because he just doesn't. The grace of God will teach different from that. But though the grace of God does teach that it should be so, yet through the weakness of the flesh (which we must not excuse too easily) and the suddenness of temptation which we need to watch and pray against, a man may slip and fall into ways which are not according to the grace of God. What then? The grace of God will bring him to confess that to the Lord, to ask to be forgiven and that hereafter that he might be helped to live according to His mind and will. There is no antinomianism in the grace of God. You see this in godly characters in the Scriptures, and in none where it is more evident than in the 119th Psalm which I used to think was a very long wearisome repetition when I was young; but I grew to love it, and to profit by it. In the 119th Psalm you see a man taught by the grace of God. Hear what he said, "Hold up my goings in Thy paths, that my footsteps slip not." "Let not iniquity have dominion over me." And when he did slip, what then? "I have gone astray like a lost sheep: seek thy servant: for I do not forget Thy commandments." Here is a man under the teaching of the grace of God. See what it teaches him, and see how he responds to that teaching, praying that the Lord would give him grace to do so. Do you find it so? Does the grace of God teach you and me like that? Do these feelings spring up in our hearts under the influence of that principle that has brought salvation to us? What would you think of anyone who said 'It does not matter how I live, what I do, what spirit I manifest; the grace of God has brought salvation unto me?' You would say 'What can he know of the grace of God? What a stranger he must be to it, if he speaks like that.' Now my friends if the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to us it will teach us how to live.

Clearly it matters how a man lives. He should live 'Soberly, righteously and godly in this present world.' Firstly negatively 'denying ungodliness and worldly lusts.' Ungodliness is really everything that is contrary to godliness. Worldly lusts are really those excessive cravings of the heart and mind after worldly things as John says "All that is in the world, the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world." The lusts of the eyes - all its ravings

after this and the other, craving after it. The pride of life - all that promises to gratify the aspiring pride of human nature, all that the world seeks after and prizes. That is not of the Father, nor of the Son. Now it is to be denied. It should not a question with a child of God how far he can go in this way and that way if it is of a worldly nature. The question is, how far he can keep away from it! To tamper with the world is like tampering with poison and evil. 'Denying ungodliness and worldly lusts,' it does not mean shouting and making a lot of noise, but denying it in ourselves. For as long as we are in the flesh there will be this tendency to crave after these worldly things. And what good could it do us if we could possess them? They bring us in guilty, make us feel that we are at a distance from the Lord, and rob us of our peace and spiritual comfort. Denying ungodliness.

Then there is the positive side, manifest in one or two ways: sobriety with regard to our own spirit; righteousness with to our dealings one with another: godliness with regard to our walking with God, Sobriety means to refrain from that which is foolish and extravagant and frivolous, and be sober minded, calm and truthful. "Gird up the loins of your mind, be sober." Sobriety my friends becomes those who possess the blessing of the grace of God. To be sober is to be moderate - not extreme. "Let your moderation be known to all men." We cannot walk with God without a sober spirit. 'Righteously': that is righteous in our dealings one with another; business men to be righteous in their ways and their methods. I wonder sometimes how far the Word of God blends in such men's practices! What it would find out? God knows if there are ways and means that will not stand square with the Word of God, and these do not became those to whom the grace of God comes. The grace of God does not show a man how to do shifty things in business; things which will not bear the light of day - underhandedness. The grace of God does not teach a man to do that but to live righteously uprightly in all our ways and responsibilities. "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal." It is not right if you do not. Servants obey your masters with honesty; it is not right if you do not. In all walks in life this enters. It is doing what is right in the sight of God, and man. 'Godliness' - that is to walk after the principles of godliness, godly fear, humility of spirit, and having the honour and glory of God in view. To serve God with reverence and godly fear. A man may have a sober disposition, may be morally upright in his ways and practices, but that does not amount to godliness. Godliness is to walk uprightly and humbly before God. In Micah we read - "What doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God." That puts it better than I can. To do justly is to live justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God is to walk godly. Now the grace of God teaches a man to do this, it sets this before his mind, and influences his heart toward it because of the godly fear in his spirit; it sobers his spirit, sobers his tongue, and influences his motives in all things, to walk humbly with his God.

And lastly; "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." As for the appearing, whether it be in the span of our lifetime or not, whether He may come, or we be taken to Him, it amounts to much the same thing, it is a blessed hope to a child of God. It is a blessed hope, and it is a hope of eternal blessedness the blessing which will come at the appearing of Jesus Christ. For He will appear in great glory and gather to Himself from the four corners of the earth the whole body of the redeemed. Every one of them He will gather to Himself and clothe them with His own glory, and fill them with His own light and love. In that day the church of God which has met with so much scorn and ridicule and contempt in the world, will say, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him, and He will save us." He will save us with an everlasting salvation. Here I must leave it. Amen.